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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4108  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6151  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3837  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3696  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4395  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1430  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4321  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000098

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; ANKARA FOR AGRICULTURAL COUNSELOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: STATE FARMS STILL RUN BY SOVIET  
METHODS

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for Public Internet.

¶2. (U) The famous Turkmen farmer Myratberdy Sopiyeu, Chairman of the Agricultural Joint Stock Association named after him, recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. President Berdimuhamedov sent Sopiyeu congratulations and a birthday gift. Local state-run newspapers published articles dedicated to the "Hero of Turkmenistan" and the "Honorable Elder of Turkmenistan," which are official titles that former President Niyazov awarded Sopiyeu. Sopiyeu has headed his eponymous state farm for 45 years.

¶3. (SBU) In Soviet-era Turkmenistan, this state farm was a showcase farm to demonstrate to foreign tourists the advantages of the kolkhoz (collective farm) system. In the early nineties, following former President Niyazov's reorganization of the farm system, the former "Soviet Turkmenistan" kolkhoz entity was renamed "agricultural joint stock association." According to a contact in the State Veterinary Service, the change in name did not change the nature of the state farm. The farm directors still do not have the freedom to make decisions about land usage, agricultural production, or marketing. Farmers on the state farm still lease land from the state to grow wheat and cotton, which they sell to the state at prices fixed by the government.

¶4. (SBU) In addition to wheat and cotton, Sopiyeu's farm grows grapes, fruit, and vegetables for the market and owns 2,900 cattle. It has its own dairy and meat processing plants, and a wine factory. The farmers receive a bonus at the end of the year if there is any profit generated from the state farm's commercial production. However, because 88 percent of the state farm's land is used for wheat and cotton, the commercial production is insignificant and profits

heavily depend on wheat and cotton contracts. This leaves the farm little money to repair housing or do anything else to prevent a gradual decline in the farmers' standard of living.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: Like in the past, Berdimuhamedov's government continues to use Sopiyeu's farm as a showcase farm, this time to demonstrate how well Berdimuhamedov takes care of farmers and how productive they are. However, during the Soviet era the government provided sufficient funding to support the image. In independent Turkmenistan, the burden of maintaining the image falls heavily on the farmers.  
END COMMENT.

CURRAN